



# **Lower Big Blue**

## **Natural Resources District**

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*Established in 1972 for the Development and Conservation of Soil and Water Resources*

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### **Lower Big Blue NRD 2020 Annual Report to the** **Blue River Compact Annual Meeting** **May 13, 2020**

A year that has seen historic flooding in many parts of the State of Nebraska, has proved to be good news for our groundwater levels. Static water levels have shown a dramatic rise this year. The Spring 2020 water levels have increased by 2.94 feet from the Spring of 2019. The difference from Fall of 2019 to the Spring of 2020 is an increase of 1.70 feet. Many wells are currently above their baseline levels of 1982.

The Watershed Capital of Nebraska continues its work on rehabilitating existing flood control structures and performing ongoing maintenance projects.

The LBBNRD finally received permitting approval to begin the rehabilitation of Cub Creek 12A. With the accomplishment of major watershed improvements, LBBNRD will now focus on improving the reservoir water quality conditions. This project includes reservoir deepening, installation of jetties, the creation of wetlands, and shoreline stabilization.

Little Indian 15A is a rehabilitation project, which began last year and is nearing completion. The hazard classification was changed to a high hazard which meant the emergency spillway needed to be widened and a larger principal spillway pipe needed to be installed.

The Wilber #1 dam rehabilitation project was recently completed. This project is located in the town of Wilber and involved upgrades to the structure. The lake was dredged and a new principle spillway was installed. The town of Wilber has developed walking trails, shelters, fishing dock and restrooms. Located near the High School, future plans include development of an outdoor classroom.

The LBB NRD continues to use principal spillway tube inserts, which allow for repair of rusted and leaking corrugated metal pipe. The inserts do not need excavation of the dam and are therefore much more economical to use. This past year the LBB NRD assisted the UBB NRD in the installation of an insert, in addition to two of our own.

A National Water Quality Area Initiative (NWQI) was approved last year in the Lower Turkey Creek drainage. Water quality impairments to be addressed are E. Coli, Atrazine and nitrates. A watershed assessment is currently in progress. Strategies to resolve water quality problems will be coordinated with NRCS and a producer advisory council.

NRD has submitted a Watershed and Flood Protection Operations (WFPO) Plan to the NRCS for the Little Indian Watershed, which is located North of Beatrice along highway 77. This project began as a pilot project in 1954 and contains 15 dams and 34 grade stabilization structures. The study will look at structural and non-structural alternatives for flood mitigation and recreation.

The Lower Big Blue NRD is in the early stages of a Voluntary Integrated Management Plan with the NDNR. A stakeholder group is currently being formed. The joint agency plan will provide a framework to manage hydrologically connected surface water and groundwater.

The Lower Big Blue NRD, in collaboration with three other NRDs and NDNR, continue work on the Blue Basin Groundwater Model Study.